

COUNCIL – 12 OCTOBER 2023

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Executive Summary

Set out below are the extracts from the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 5 October 2023, setting out the recommendations for consideration by Council.

THE EXECUTIVE – 5 OCTOBER 2023

8A. SHEERWATER REGENERATION

Councillor Forster, Portfolio Holder for Key Projects, introduced the report which provided an update on the Council's funding request to Government, a summary of the results of the public consultation undertaken over the summer, and the proposals for the remainder of the Sheerwater regeneration area. It was noted that the Council, at its meeting on 20 July 2023, had agreed that the existing Development Agreement between the Council and ThamesWey for the delivery of the Sheerwater regeneration project be brought to an end and no new phases would commence following those currently under construction. The Portfolio Holder advised that a robust business case had been developed to support the Council's funding request to Government of £57.7 million to complete the three phases – Copper, Red and Yellow – which were currently mid-construction. The outcome of the funding request was due shortly.

The Executive was advised that the Council had received 507 responses to the survey on the future of the Sheerwater regeneration area, a summary of the consultation results was included in Appendix 1 to the report. The views of local residents had been taken into consideration and it was proposed that the Council progressed the refurbishment of circa 106 homes within the regeneration area, including Woodlands Park, Hennessey Court and Spencer Close, along with refurbishment of the sheltered housing at Woodlands House. The Portfolio Holder highlighted that retaining those 106 homes within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) would generate additional net income to the HRA of circa £650,000 per annum from 2024/25. It was proposed that the remaining units in the regeneration area be offered to the market. The Council would work with the private sector and housing associations to ensure any redevelopment fitted the street scene.

Regarding the public consultation, it was highlighted that there had been low satisfaction with recreation facilities, such as Multi-Use Games Area and skate park. Moving forward, it was suggested that this could be considered in the Council's arrangements with housing associations and the private sector to involve the public and meet local needs. Attention was drawn to the under-representation in the consultation of residents from an Asian background and that work was needed to understand the barriers to taking part and to ensure all residents were reached as the process progressed. It was noted that the Portfolio Holder was arranging to visit and speak at Sheerwater Mosque to improve engagement with the Asian community.

The Executive was hopeful that the Government would agree the Council's funding request to complete the three active construction phases, and was supportive of the proposals for the remainder of the Sheerwater regeneration area.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- That (i) the progress on Red, Yellow and Copper phases be noted;
- (ii) the Council retains and refurbishes circa 106 homes within the Sheerwater Regeneration area as set out in Section 5 of the report;
- (iii) the costs of refurbishment, estimated at £2.9 million, be covered by capital receipts and Local Authority Housing Funding (if appropriate);
- (iv) the Strategic Director – Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Key Projects, be authorised to agree proposals to consolidate ownership of vacant housing assets between ThamesWey and the Council; and
- (v) the residual land and properties within the Sheerwater Regeneration area (excluding those to be retained) continue to be vacated and offered to the market for disposal, as set out in Section 4.7 of the report, to maximise the capital receipt.

Reason: To enable a sustainable delivery option for the Sheerwater Regeneration project whilst reducing financial risks and exposure to the Council.

8B. 2023 REVIEW OF THE WOKING CORE STRATEGY

Councillor Lyons, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, introduced the report which recommended to Council the conclusions of the 5 Year Review of the Core Strategy. The Executive was informed that there was a legislative requirement to review the Core Strategy every five years. The Council had produced its Core Strategy in 2012 and it was last reviewed in 2018. The Core Strategy provided the local strategic planning framework for the management of land uses in the Borough for the period up to 2027. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the review had demonstrated that all the policies of the Core Strategy remained up-to-date and fit for purpose, and were in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It was noted that a consultation with other statutory bodies had been undertaken, under the provisions of Duty to Cooperate guidance, and the comments raised would be taken into consideration when work began on a new Local Plan.

The Executive welcomed that green infrastructure was embedded in the Core Strategy and would feature strongly in the new Local Plan which would be required from 2027. Subject to Council approval, Officers would bring forward a timetable and work programme regarding the new Local Plan including stakeholder consultation. It was noted that the Masterplan work would be incorporated into the new Local Plan. The availability of office space in local centres and provision of three bedroom homes in the Borough were highlighted as areas of attention when considering the new Local Plan. The Planning Policy Team were thanked for their work on the review.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- That (i) the conclusions of the 5 Year Review of the Core Strategy set out in the report be confirmed; and

Supplementary Report – Recommendations of the Executive

(ii) Officers bring forward a timetable and associated outline of the work programme to produce a new Local Plan for the Borough of Woking.

Reason: To consider a 5 year review of the Core Strategy which determines whether the policies contained within it are up to date and effective, as required by the local plan regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework. The last review of the Core Strategy was undertaken in 2018. There is a legislative requirement to review a Core Strategy every five years and a review in 2023 was required. The Core Strategy sets out strategic planning policy for the Borough until 2027. A new Local Plan or possibly a new Core Strategy will be required from 2027.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendations set out above.

Background Papers: None.

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REPORT ENDS

